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For Immediate Release

March 19, 1968

MORE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING - NIHONMACHI

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Buchanan Street will be closed for two blocks to create two major shopping malls connected by a Japanese-style pedestrian bridge across Sutter Street.

Bilingual signs typical of commercial areas in Japanese cities will convey a Ginza shopping atmosphere.

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March 19, 1968

MORE COLLABORATIVE PLANNING - NIHONMACHI

The first formal step toward the creation of a striking new Nihonmachi (Japan Town) in the Western Addition was taken today.

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency agreed to sell many sites in an historic four-block area to the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation, representing the neighborhood's property owners and residents.

As a result of collaborative planning between the neighborhood and the Agency:

Bright new Japanese shops, town houses and apartments will be built in the four square blocks bounded by Bush, Post, Webster and Laguna Streets.

More than one-third of the houses and businesses, in addition, will be restored.

Buchanan Street will be closed for two blocks to create two major shopping malls connected by a Japanese-style pedestrian bridge across Sutter Street.

Bilingual signs typical of commercial areas in Japanese cities will convey a Ginza shopping atmosphere.

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In all, some 250 new units of private housing will be added, with 80 units to be rehabilitated. Emphasis on housing will be in low-to-moderate price bracket.

The four square blocks have been the center of the Japanese-American community in San Francisco since shortly after the earthquake and fire of 1906.

During redevelopment, the neighborhood corporation and the Agency will continue to consult constantly on design and construction, in accordance with agreed-upon architectural guidelines.

"This unique renewal of an entire community would not be possible without neighborhood participation," said Masao Ashizawa, President of Nihonmachi Corporation, and M. Justin Herman, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency.

"The Nihonmachi will be the newest and richest of so many contributions of the Japanese-American community to the City of St. Francis. It will have the flavor of the past as well as the spirit of the modern," they said.

In the new Japan Town there will also be a community center fronting on a plaza which will be built on the northwest corner of Buchanan and Sutter.

The site will be made available to the community by the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation, typifying the spirit of cooperation that distinguishes the neighborhood, Herman said.

Moreover, the churches and shrines of several sects in the neighborhood will be preserved, and a number of restaurants will be restored.

Nihonmachi is appropriately the good neighbor immediately to the north of the new Japanese Cultural and Trade Center.

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There the Peace Pagoda further will symbolize for both developments their cultural and economic ties to Japan.

One of the key elements of the Nihonmachi renewal project is that the housing will primarily be developed by the present householders for their own uses.

The Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation is composed of more than 80 individual shareholders, including 60 percent of the property owners in the area.

Redevelopment of Japan Town in the heart of Western Addition Area A-2 will take place in stages as the result of the agreement signed by the Corporation and the Agency.

Parcels of land will be sold for commercial and residential development as they are assembled, thus causing the least possible disruption to businesses and residents.

This will also permit financing to be more easily obtained.

END

SAN FRANCISCO REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
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March 19, 1968

DATA SHEET - NIHONMACHI DEVELOPMENT

Development: A new 10-acre Nihonmachi (Japan Town) in the heart of the Western Addition A-2 redevelopment area to consist of new and restored homes and businesses, apartments, shops and malls.

Location: Four blocks bounded by Bush, Post, Laguna and Webster Streets, immediately north of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center.

Developer: The Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation -- comprised of over 80 individual shareholders. Over 60 percent of the property owners as well as 50 percent of the commercial tenants in the four-block area are Corporation members.

Membership in the Corporation, President of which is Masao Ashizawa, includes San Francisco residents of many national and ethnic derivations with most, but not all, being Japanese Americans. The leadership role derives from owner-occupants of commercial enterprises and residents rather than absentee owners.

Disposition: A unique arrangement whereby shareholder property owners and tenants, chosen under a priority system concurred in by the Agency and the neighborhood Corporation, will be given the first opportunity to purchase cleared sites at fair market value....and to develop on these sites shops, housing and community facilities consistent with the Nihonmachi plan.

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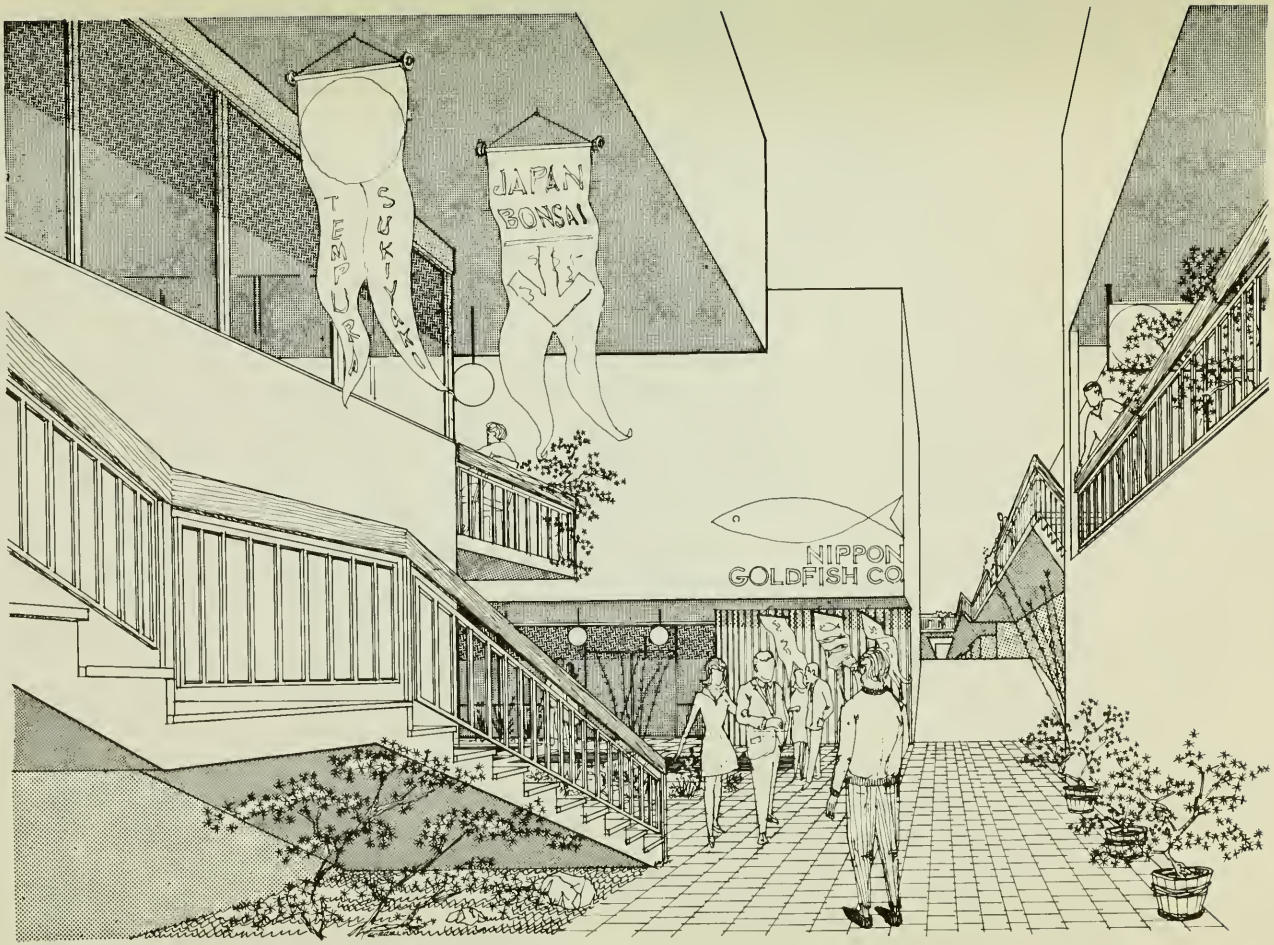
Key Elements:

1. Closure of two blocks of Buchanan Street between Bush and Post to create two shopping malls.
2. On the northern portion of Buchanan Mall, north of Sutter, in addition to shops, a site for a community facility to be fronted by a plaza for community outdoor activities.
3. On the southern portion of Buchanan Mall, south of Sutter, shopping on both sides of a mall in two-story buildings with ramps and bridges connecting some 100,000 square feet of stores, shops and offices.
4. Both residential and commercial properties will be rehabilitated -- about one-third of the structures now standing.
5. Of the 10 acres of land within the Nihonmachi area, more than 3 acres will be for public and institutional use and for open space.
6. Some 250 new units of housing will be added to the 80 units to be retained and rehabilitated. Private housing for the elderly, flats and townhouses in the low-to-moderate priced brackets will be built primarily by the residents and institutions in the area.

Architects: Van Bourg/Nakamura, Berkeley and Okamoto/Liskamm, San Francisco



Nihon Machi-view looking east from Buchanan St. Mall
March 19, 1968